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# The Playground

The World at Play



AFTER A MORNING AT THE PLAYGROUND

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# The Playground

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## PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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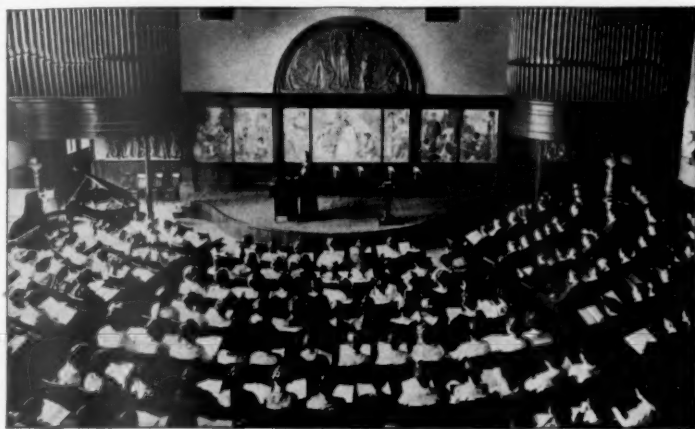
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William A. McKeever

THE STORIES HEARD UPON THE PLAYGROUND WILL IN YEARS TO COME BE TOLD BY  
THE GIRLS IN THEIR OWN HOMES

## THE ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS TOWARD NEIGHBORHOOD PLAY CENTERS

Among the powerful friends of playgrounds and recreation in America the newspapers of the country may be given an important rank, for few and scattered are the editorials against playgrounds, while the number of splendid, sane endorsements in the editorial columns can scarcely be counted. The relation of play and crime or delinquency is the theme of many of these. Says the *Louisville Courier-Journal*:

"At a meeting of the city club in Philadelphia recently at which the subject of municipal recreation was under discussion one of the speakers gave utterance to the sentiment: 'A foot of playground is worth an acre of penal institutions.'

"It is difficult to gauge the value of the playground but in every city where a playground or a system of playgrounds has been established the testimony has been in its favor as a beneficent institution. Most of our American cities did not give much thought to the recreation idea in the beginning, but none of them undertook to get along without prisons. Perhaps if the playgrounds were more numerous the country might be able to dispense with a few acres of its penal establishments.

"That the playground has a civilizing and elevating influence is not to be doubted. Figures compiled in various cities show that juvenile offenses are fewest in localities where recreation grounds are available. They also show that there are fewer accidents and injuries to children in such neighborhoods. Children who are 'raised up in the street' make trouble for themselves and for other persons. In cities where there is not a playground system it is inevitable that children will play in the streets—for it is the nature of the child to play.

"No city ever made a bad investment in buying a playground or in establishing a system of playgrounds. There are very few cities that are adequately supplied in this way and it is regrettable to say that Louisville is not one of the fortunate few."

The Cincinnati *Times-Star* says:

"Of all the movements toward improvement in our cities that have been in evidence these past few years, not one is more deserving of popular support than that which looks toward the providing of plenty of open spaces for the children. In those cities which are fortunate enough to possess adequate playground systems, the influence of these breathing spaces upon the next generation will inevitably be very great.

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"Cincinnati has made a good deal of progress in playground development these past few years. But we still have a long way to go!"

The Taunton, Mass., *Gazette* finds in abuse of a cemetery by boys of the neighborhood evidence of the need of a proper playground.

The Reading, Mass., *Chronicle* puts the question squarely: "The question is, Are the young people of Reading entitled to a place where they can engage in athletics, baseball, football, tennis, track sports, folk dancing, and general healthful recreation to take up their spare time?"

A number of newspapers have done good service in protesting against playgrounds closed at hours when they might be used. The New Bedford, Mass., *Standard* ran a series of protests, accompanied sometimes by pictures with such captions as "Sunbeams and Sparrows Play within Fence while Children Gaze Wistfully, from Outside." "When Is a Playground not a Playground? Why, in the Springtime and Early Fall, of Course!" The *Standard* suggests that a sign should be placed on every gate, reading, "Hathaway Playground for Children. Children Forbidden to Play Here." The children might detect a certain inconsistency and injustice in such a notice, but then they are only children." In Bridgeport, Conn., too, the *Telegram* asks: "Why is it that the city, owning expensive, 'scientific' playgrounds for children, keeps those playgrounds systematically locked and barred so that children cannot by any mischance get into them?"

"Why is it that with these playgrounds, children must play on the streets, where they are in imminent danger of being run down by automobiles?"

"Why are these playgrounds closed for the greater part of the year, and closed for the greater part of the day when they are ostensibly open?"

"An expensive plant which is inoperative the greater part of the time is highly inefficient. Bridgeport's system of playgrounds is inefficient with a cruel and needless sort of inefficiency, the kind that is depriving children of the chance to play, or forcing them into the street where it is dangerous for them, and troublesome for other users of the street."

The same desire for a chance for the children is manifested in word from Hartford, Conn., "We have twenty-one parks and squares in Hartford and not one 'Keep off the grass' sign."

The point of view suggested in the New York *Times* in discussing the report that Denver's Commission government has proved considerably more expensive than the old way is seen in many discussions

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of the high cost of playgrounds. "The mere fact that the city has spent more this year than last proves nothing at all. Denver should be more interested in the question whether it got its money's worth than in the amount it spent." Says the Newark, N. J., *Evening Star*: "About \$70,000 of the Newark taxpayers' money well spent on two important phases of public betterment is the story of the annual report of the Playground Commission. The total attendance at the playgrounds last year was close to 934,000, so that each dollar of the \$45,000 appropriation enabled one child to enjoy twenty times the varied recreations of these spaces, safe from the dangers of street traffic and under faithful care and teaching. Similar figuring might be applied to the \$26,000 appropriation for the public baths and the total patronage of more than 722,000 people.

"Conspicuous among the recommendations of the commission for a still wider usefulness of the recreation system is that certain streets be set aside for children to play in at hours when traffic can be suspended. Recognizing that the completion of the trunk sewer will enable a revival of the good old era of aquatic sports on the purified Passaic, the commission shows foresight in advising that now is the time to make plans for parks along the river banks, as proposed by the original Essex Park Commission. Newarkers have reason to be proud of their playgrounds for the children and baths for the whole community population and to commend the excellent management of these two great municipal activities, which tend to a happier, healthier and cleaner community and make the moderate sum which they cost fully worth while."

The Harrisburg, Pa., *Telegraph*: "Just what the cities of the United States over 30,000 in population are doing with their money is shown in an interesting census report recently issued. According to this report the cost of government in municipalities of this class has advanced 33 per cent., or from \$13.02 per capita to \$17.34. Thirty-two cents of this increase was for police protection; 20 cents for fire protection, and \$1.41 for education. The remainder of the increase went for such things as health and sanitation, playgrounds, parks, municipal improvements, and so on. Ordinarily such increases might not be looked upon with pleasure; but in view of the fact that nearly all the increases went toward better living conditions and education, perhaps it is not so bad that municipal taxes are higher now than they used to be. Certainly we in Harrisburg have been getting our money's worth."

"It is poor economy to postpone acquiring park lands. Land for

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parks and playgrounds should be acquired a little faster than the population increases. Delays are costly. The time has come for us to make this step, to issue long term bonds for a considerable sum and make the improvements which are so necessary to our proper development. The cost of carrying these bonds and of the very improvements themselves would not be a burden upon the taxpayers, but on the contrary would be speedily returned in increased ratables." (*Hoboken Observer*.)

"We are proud of the children of Jacksonville, but if the city in its progressiveness thinks that an expenditure of money for play is a luxury, we will have a sad awakening when the boy of Jacksonville becomes a voter. A boy problem of any city is a city's problem, and if we continue to give him the street and gutter for his playground, we can expect to have an undesirable citizen of tomorrow.

"A few years ago the boy of Jacksonville had sufficient play space which was a result of the fire—but what about today? If he attempts to start a ball game, the first inning will hardly be reached before an officer of the law is upon the scene, and the boy is warned that another attempt will mean arrest. Then the boy invariably seeks to evade the law through his cunningness and will often try to play between the watches of the cop. Thus the city starts early to teach its future citizens contempt and total disregard for law through lack of proper designated playgrounds.

"Jacksonville is spending much money and time on material development which is necessary—but what about human development and conservation? The boy—the future voter—has been entirely forgotten and left to his own resources, and the result is petty crime and moral degenerates. The time for the installation of athletic fields and playgrounds is now and not tomorrow, and it is criminal not to give the boy a chance."

Evidently there are those who have more faith in the willingness of the people to support playgrounds than had the Scranton councilman who, when Supt. C. R. H. Jackson of the playgrounds of Scranton Pa., was pleading for the full amount of the budget of \$7400. which the Council was threatening to cut, dared him to run for Council next year on the platform, "I favor more playgrounds and a consequent increase of taxation."

According to a bulletin issued by the Information Census Bureau, Denver, Colorado, spends for recreation 7.4 per cent of all the money expended by its general departments. The per capita for recreation is \$1.44, higher than that of any one city of its class. The

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per capita expenditure for hospitals, charities, and correction is only 68 cents in spite of the large number of transient invalids in the city.

Commenting on the statement of certain economic and sociological writers that as free land goes and farm values soar it will be increasingly hard for a man to rise from one class to another and aristocracy and snobbishness will result, the Kansas City, Mo., *Star* says:

"It is to be hoped that the learned writers are mistaken. There are forces working against snobbishness as well as for it. The importance of one of the allies of the wholesome forces is only now being recognized. Boys who know each other in play can never completely misunderstand one another afterwards. There is no truer democracy than that of fair play in games where only skill, which all have a chance to acquire, counts. The playground has proved to be, along with the public school, a strong agent for democracy."

"The trouble with our educational system is that it straps children to school seats for five hours a day, gives them monotonous, impractical and artificial instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, and then expects that in some miraculous way the result will be a rising generation full of health, virtue, intelligence, knowledge and industry! *Under such circumstances children are not educated; they are annihilated.*

*"The problem of educating children resolves itself into the need of finding suitable occupation for the whole of a child's time, for it is during the idle hours, during the time when guidance and supervision are almost entirely withdrawn, that characters are ruined and right development is checked."* (N. Y. *Morning World*)

A number of newspapers commented favorably on William E. Harmon's view: "The plea for including parks and playgrounds in developing suburban properties has hitherto been made to the public spirit of real estate men, rather than to their business judgment. They have been urged to perform a civic duty, to make a present to the community of a part of the property purchased by them for hard cash, but it is my deliberate judgment, based on a quarter of a century of experience, that just the contrary is true; that here we have one of those cases where philanthropy is good business."

And, as though to support that belief, the following advertisement appears:

### "A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS HOME

"I have recently completed at No. 1605 East 7th street—exactly opposite the Children's Playgrounds—and opposite the East 7th

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street 'Crystal Springs'—one of the nicest bungalow homes in that section. The lot alone with no house on it is easily worth \$2,500—as any real estate man in Charlotte will tell you—if he knows anything about values out there—We bought the lot long time ago when they were very cheap—we have built the house—added our regular profit—it's your gain. We will take other property in exchange on this place too—\$4,250 is the price—and it's a dandy place for a family with small children—the playgrounds and advantages offered your children there, are worth the price.

"Since the PLAYGROUNDS were established, property adjacent is leaping in values—people won't sell for love nor money out there."

The New York *Evening World* conducted a campaign for more spaces for children's play. The *World* representative, Sophie Irene Loeb, accompanied a committee seeking unused lots and kept the public informed of the progress made each day. The closing of a large number of streets for play during certain hours was in part due to this paper's efforts.

The Los Angeles *Record* prints the following: "There is as much need of keeping the watchful eye on the BOY as the girl! Put boys under the surveillance of school authority from the minute they enter the school grounds until it is time for them to go home to their evening meal.

"Do away with the unsupervised recreation hours between the close of school in the afternoon and the supper hour at home.

"Make the playground movement fulfill its mission in the fullest sense of the word.

"Don't take play away from the boy, but know what he is playing, and where he is playing.

"These are some of the recommendations which will probably be included in a letter to parents written late today by a committee of school men. It is to be a companion to the letter of warning issued some time ago to parents regarding their girls. The idea originated with the City Mothers' bureau and has been gladly seconded by the principals, vice-principals and teachers of the public schools. The girls' letter was written by women. The boys' letter is to be drafted by men. The chairman of the committee, Geo. A. Rice, instructor at the Lincoln high school said this morning: 'I cannot say positively what will be in the letter yet. But I think we shall incorporate the suggestion that Los Angeles follow in the wake of New York in the full utilization of the playground movement. There I understand, is

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playground supervision from the time school is out till supper time. Unless students have some good reason to go elsewhere, they remain on the grounds where they may engage in all sorts of recreations. We shall probably recommend that parents and teachers work in closer co-operation for the protection of the youngsters, and that parents make a greater effort to know where their youngsters are after leaving school.' "

George A. Parker of Hartford, Conn., writes in *Park and Cemetery*:

"It is customary in discussing playgrounds or play opportunities to consider them as a center of a circle of influences of varying diameters, such as, a playground for small children has a radius of influence of one thousand feet, one for larger children of two thousand feet; and a baseball field of a mile, but it seems to me a clearer conception of their influence can be gained by considering a city as a great maelstrom of human life, with placid even currents in some parts, and strong rapids in others, and innumerable eddies and whirlpools caused by the conflicting and contrary directions of the different currents. In this maelstrom child life and weaklings are too often caught and held helpless in the eddies and whirlpools. The extent of the influences of the playground depends upon the extent and vigor of the eddy it serves and cannot be measured by any geometrical form, for public playgrounds are needed most in the eddies of city life and not so much for the homes of those located in the even, placid stream of life.

"Recreation in cities is a new problem. Heretofore, men and women were made under country influences, and afterwards lived in the city. The reverse of this fact is fast coming true. Up to the present time the city has not been able to produce fully developed men and women from boys and girls born in the city of parents who were born and lived continuously in the city. Rare indeed, has been the exception to this rule. The time must come, and I believe soon will come, when cities will produce stronger and better men and women than the country ever did. When it does so, the recreation problem of cities will have been solved, for recreation is the road to this end. Recreation, then, is a constructive force of the first magnitude in city building equal to and co-ordinate with the other two great constructive forces, work and education.

"The variety and amount of recreation facilities needed is quite constant with each group of people living under similar conditions, and varies but little in groups of ten thousand.

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"The recreation desired by any condition or class of people will be supplementary and complementary to their daily work and education, and while varying much as to groups, is quite constant within each group.

"If play facilities are provided too abundantly or not sufficiently to meet the people's needs, the group as a whole is weakened. There is proportion or balance between their needs and the means of satisfying them that will give the greatest strength and the best results."

Mrs. Florence Kelley of New York, writing in the *National Municipal Review* on "Children in the Cities," says, "Whenever some city awakens to the need of organizing the space back of the house with the care which is now confined to the front, there will be needed no policemen, they can be left in the streets, but instead physicians, nurses and kindergarten or Montessori teachers. With the rear space used as gardens for those too young to go to school, to command an outdoor life day or night, rain or sunshine, winter or summer, these municipal friends can protect life and keep the peace far more readily than the police have ever yet succeeded in doing in the streets."

The Reverend Richard W. Boynton, of Buffalo, New York, has said that more facilities are needed for city boys in order to develop strong, rugged bodies, since only by training the muscles can the will be trained.

Dr. C. F. Aked lauds the influence of the schoolhouse in American life, in the *New York American*: "It is inspiring to think that after three centuries of world-great achievement the schoolhouse seems to be only at a beginning of its career. In practically every important city of the land the evolution of the school house is apparent. The school becomes the social center, the recreational center of community life. Municipalities appropriate funds. Men and women organize and direct the healthy recreation of the city's boys and girls. A legitimate human need should be met, a legitimate instinct for pleasure and the joy of life gratified in proper places, at proper times, under proper conditions, and every one should be happier for it.

"In San Francisco the Recreation League has established such a center in the Monroe Grammar School, serving a crowded neighborhood in the Mission district. The Center boasts of a Boys' Club, Girls' Gymnasium, Dramatic Club, and a Choral Section. More, of course, ought to be established without delay. There is need for them in many parts of the city, and in every large city."

The second annual Report of the chief of the Children's Bureau to the secretary of Labor (Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1914) declares:

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"Recreation is now universally recognized as one of the important subjects in any program for the welfare of children. As the community increasingly holds itself responsible for the education of the child, for his physical well-being and for protection against moral injury, it necessarily enters the field of providing recreation.

"The provision of play spaces is now assumed, in greater or less degree, as a municipal responsibility by more than 300 American cities. The value of play spaces depends upon certain principles of accessibility, of equipment, and management which have been stated, but which need to be studied and applied by local authorities, as towns develop, with the same eye to the future with which schoolhouses are provided.

"But almost greater than the need to standardize the provision for recreation made by the community itself is the need to determine upon an effective way to standardize the commercial recreations offered to children. The reports of the Chicago censor board for 'movies' under the Chicago department of police show that last year (1913) over 80 miles of film were condemned by the board."

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That the newspapers and other leaders of public opinion have the people behind them in their growing advocacy of playgrounds is indicated by the reports which come in of townspeople turning out in a body to clean up grounds or otherwise prepare them for recreative uses. Straws show which way the wind blows. The Commercial Club of Helena, Montana, set aside a day in which every able-bodied man was asked to take a pick or shovel or in some way do a real day's work on the Great Northern Park site donated to the city. Boys of the Sinai Social Center in Chicago borrowed a plot of land, cleaned it of weeds, tin cans and other refuse and made a playground which "compares favorably with the best in the city." Women of the park improvement committee of Colfax, Washington, not only held a pavement dance for their fund, but after the filling was completed, drove wagons of dirt a mile across the city to provide the top dressing for grass and flowers. The wagons were loaded and unloaded by business men, who assisted the women. Children of Allentown, Pennsylvania, and of Red Bank, New Jersey, participated in monster parades, calling attention to the need of playgrounds. High school boys of Walla Walla, Washington, made play apparatus for the playgrounds.

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A Jewish newsboys' club in Cincinnati donated a treasury surplus of five dollars to the fund for opening school playgrounds. The playground of Public School 150, Brooklyn, New York, was kept open several months in addition to the municipal provision by the Council of Jewish Women.

Colored men of Lawrence, Kansas, are collecting subscriptions for a playhouse for the colored people of Lawrence. The intense interest shown by the colored boys in their free day at the Y. M. C. A. roused the men to a recognition of the need for supervised play.

The University Extension Division of the University of Kansas has established a department of general information with a view to making knowledge of all sorts more generally available to the people of Kansas. This department will assist schools, parents, organizations in all matters pertaining to child welfare. It furnishes lectures by members of the University faculty, sends out lantern slides upon educational subjects, and moving picture films; selects plays for high schools and other organizations; and co-operates with women's clubs, civic clubs, debating societies and other similar organizations in every way possible.

**POOR LITTLE RICH CHILDREN.**—A playground for "poor little rich children" was opened in New York City by Miss Alma Guy, who became convinced that they needed play and playgrounds almost more than the children of the crowded districts where playgrounds are usually placed.

"I had always accepted the fact that children were taken to Central Park for their outings. I took several walks through the park, and then I was convinced that playgrounds for the rich children were a necessity. For what were the children under the care of their nurses and governesses doing? Playing? Not a bit of it. They were either walking up and down or sitting on the benches. Now, there is nothing more tiring for a child than walking aimlessly up or down, or trying to sit still on a bench. The nurses and governesses seemed to be the only ones really enjoying themselves. They could visit with one another. The one benefit accruing to the children was the fact that they were out of doors in fresh air.

"But I wanted to see them skipping about exercising their muscles, shouting and laughing. Instead, they looked bored—as who wouldn't?

"The children I was observing are those who will grow up to be what is known as 'society men and women.' So it struck me as paradoxical that these children had no social life at all. Most of them

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didn't know any other children of the same age. Few of them came of big families."

So the playground was started. At first the children came in white dresses or suits and fancy ribbons, but soon they wore real play clothes which they needn't fear to soil or tear.

Many of the playgrounds of Oakland, California, are headquarters for women's outdoor clubs. Volley ball is the preferred game of most of these clubs, though baseball has been elected the club game in a few.

**BUSINESS MEN.**—The East Orange Playground Commission has arranged to give locker room to a number of business men who play tennis between six and eight in the morning, thus enabling them to play right up till train time, instead of stopping in time to go home to dress. Brookline, Massachusetts, has a twilight baseball league for men and boys over seventeen. Games are played at five-thirty p. m. in order to encourage workers to use the grounds after business hours.

Buffalo kept its golf links open during the summer of 1914 from sunrise until dark and the links were always crowded as early as seven o'clock in the morning, and sometimes many players were out at five a. m.

The playgrounds of Rockford, Ill., have found roque a very popular game. Two rinks for bowling on the green are also popular and regular match games are played.

The boys of Aurora, Illinois, held a kite contest in which many of the kites were six or seven feet long.

A quoit tourney under the direction of the Pittsburgh playground association, with double and single matches, was held in the summer of 1914.

Wilmington, Del., conducted municipal hikes during the summer of 1914, open to all persons who cared to go. The roads lead through the woods to a cool, delightful spot for a resting place, and a place to eat lunch. Hornell, New York, also had regular hikes through the summer.

**FIGURES THAT SPEAK.**—During 1914 the gymnasiums of the South Park System of Chicago were used 1,636,160 times; the swimming pools 792,159 times; the bathing beaches 33,659 times.

The shower baths were used about two million times during the year 1913.

Philadelphia reports that the attendance upon the twenty-two municipal playgrounds was almost doubled in the year 1914.

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Evening high school students of New York City held an athletic meet in March at which some of the best talent and keenest sportsmanship in amateur athletics was in evidence.

Campfires and "wiener roasts" in nearby woods helped to make summer happy for Akron, Ohio, playground boys and girls. Jersey City playgrounds have commission government modeled upon that of the city, with officers elected by the children from their own number, from mayor down to police force. Clinics for mothers, with lectures by well-known physicians and nurses, held at the summer playgrounds in Denver, are said to have reduced the infant mortality of the city.

Baltimore has expended \$8,000 for a municipal band. West New York, New Jersey, has a weekly band concert on the playground. A chorus of two hundred children from Salt Lake City sang at the Pioneer Day celebration. Choral singing is a regular activity of the playground. Children of the Petworth school playground, in Washington, D. C., gave a play weekly.

**DRAMATICS.**—The Wisconsin Players have developed a form of recreation almost boundless in its possibilities, little developed in most communities as yet. They write and present plays, maintain a school of acting and a dramatic work-shop, and send "unprofessional" touring companies throughout the Middle West. Like the Irish Players in their early days at the Abbey Theatre, or the Washington Square Players of New York City, the Wisconsin Dramatic Society is an experiment in carrying out the expression of the lives of the people of the community, their individual interests, tastes and ideals in terms of dramatic art. Most of the players are young men and women of the towns and villages of the State, many of them working people.

The Mountain Play of California, that famous drama held upon the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais, will give as its third annual production *Rip Van Winkle*.

**STORYTELLING.**—In honor of the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen, the Junior Department of the Drama League in Los Angeles co-operated with the school and playground in a gala day in Elysian Park. The morning was given over to storytelling to groups centralized under the trees. After a picnic lunch, the thousands of children and grown-ups flocked to the natural woodland theatre, where a series of fairy plays, tableaux and pantomimes were given.

Dr. John L. Elliott, believing strongly in storytelling for boys' clubs to build up a moral background, suggests classic literature, the

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Bible, mythology, fables, the epics, Shakespeare, Kipling, history and the daily newspapers. Damon and Pythias, The Fight with the Cannon, The Hero of Battle Row, a story from a newspaper report in 1907, succeeded in showing the meanness of race prejudice. "Their Natural King," based on a story of Prince Harry of Monmouth, is a story that never fails of response and the boys invariably discover the points,—loyalty, obedience to law, and unswerving devotion to duty.

PRIVATE PLAYGROUNDS FOR THE PUBLIC.—From York, Pennsylvania, comes word of a playground in a department store, owned by P. Wiest's Sons. A space fifty feet square at the south end of the top floor is equipped with slides, and see-saws and two play leaders are provided.

The Neversink Dye Works of Reading, Pennsylvania, has announced the opening of a playground for children in the vicinity of the plant. At Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania, a baseball diamond has been laid out by the Penn Public Service Company for its employees and a free swimming pool and general playground is being considered.

An interesting idea is occasionally expressed that positions in playgrounds or recreation parks of a city should be given only to those who are residents of that city. That such a shortsighted policy should be advocated by American citizens in a country in which brotherhood, not only with the people in your own block but also with the people in your city and community is constantly boasted of, and where the great watchword of patriots is "co-operation," seems a very curious phenomenon. Commenting upon this provincial attitude of mind, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* says—"The only thought should be to get the best man for the place that the salary will command quite regardless of whether the man is to be found in the city or one thousand miles away. It is mistaken civic patriotism to demand that a local office of this character must be filled by a local man." Many feel that at least one-third of the new school teachers each year should come from outside the city limits. Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Burlington, Newark, Harrisburg, are among the cities that have begun definite steps to make sure that a certain proportion of teachers each year are appointed from other cities besides their own. Undoubtedly the same system should be followed in the appointment of play leaders and supervisors, for the narrow, local point of view is just as harmful in the recreation of a municipality as in education.

The principal of Public School 10, Paterson, N. J., hearing of the action of the Mayor in appointing a playground commission wrote the following letter to the Mayor:

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"I have studied this playground proposition from various angles and I have observed the life of our city children, and I firmly believe that with sufficient and supervised playgrounds for all our children, juvenile crime would almost disappear. The wrong doing of our children is not so much of evil intent as misdirected energy. The old days of great areas of open country for free play are largely gone. There is no place for them now but the open street, which is becoming very dangerous for them, besides the annoyance to the householders and traffic. Besides, it is in the seclusion of the back alley that most of the vice has its origin. There should be sufficient playgrounds properly supervised to take care of every child, when out of school. In the end it would reduce our criminal expenditures to such an extent as to overbalance the cost of the playgrounds. This is one of the most constructive pieces of municipal statesmanship that has been proposed in our city."

A LETTER FROM MANILA.—"You will be glad to know that our playground work goes steadily on here and that new grounds are being opened up and new equipment secured constantly. A prominent Filipino recently donated a thousand pesos worth of equipment and Bishop Brent has secured from some friends in the States more than two thousand pesos worth, half of which will be used in Manila and half to equip the first playground in Moro county. Just yesterday the Municipal Board made an appropriation of ten thousand pesos for playground supervision, and so our work moves steadily."

FESTIVAL DAYS.—There are two times each year when one wishes earnestly for an airship in order that all of the playgrounds or school outdoor festivals or celebrations might be visited. As these usually come during the month of May or the latter part of August, a very speedy airship would be necessary in order even to touch all of the cities where these festivals are held. This year, the number of community celebrations has been very much increased by the various Christmas celebrations which have meant so much to the people of cities where community Christmas trees and community celebrations have been instituted. Among the cities which have sent word of large athletic meets are Brooklyn, N. Y., Allentown, Pa., Richmond, Va., and El Paso, Texas. In most of these cities the athletic meets for the older boys were combined with singing games for the smaller children and folk dancing for the girls. Nothing is prettier than acres of dancing or playing children, and not only for the delight of the children but also for the effect on the interest and enthusiasm of the people of the city, we should have more of these community festival days.

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Many cities have not only a play day but complete the program with some sort of dramatic festival or spectacle ranging in various cities from a tremendous pageant such as that given in St. Louis or Philadelphia, to the simplest kind of pantomime, which is no less sure of appeal to the spectators. Lexington, Mass., brought a three-day playground carnival to a close when the town of Lexington entertained seventy-five boys and girls and their play leaders from five Boston playgrounds with a sightseeing tour about the town, an outdoor dinner, folk dancing and games by the visitors, a flag salute and the singing of America.

Pageants in Janesville, Wis., Newark, N. J., Newburgh, N. Y., and a great pageant of New York City in which 3,000 children represented the history of New York City must be included in the list of interesting historical pageants. In Pittsfield, Mass., 300 children took part in a pageant of the pre-revolutionary period of the state of Massachusetts; in Chester, Pa., a pageant of the seasons was given. In Jefferson, Iowa, the subject of a pageant was "The Festival of Play When Miss Iowa Comes to Town," representing the history and progress of Green County, Iowa. In Colorado Springs, Colo., the early history of Colorado with cowboys and Indians and the gold mining period and the dramatization of Colorado's admission to the Union formed the basis for a very beautiful pageant, none the less beautiful because the financial cost was but \$20.00. In Dallas, Texas, the most noteworthy feature of an exhibition was the presentation of Greek and Indian dances. Games and dances were given at a Richmond, Va., festival and a similar program was presented before the delegates at the conference of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in Grant Park, Chicago, under the direction of Amalie Hofer Jerome.

One day of the Monmouth County Fair in New Jersey was the playground day.

Five hundred colored children and their fathers and mothers had a play day at the opening of their own playground in Richmond, Va., presented by a woman of Richmond. Flag-raising, baseball and basket ball games, track events, band concerts, and fire works attracted great numbers of people to the community play days of Norwich, N. Y., Toledo, Ohio, Glens Falls, N. Y., Hornell, N. Y., and Wyomissing, Pa.

The May Festival at Alameda, California, drew many thousands of spectators. It consisted of a great parade, followed by a pageant in two parts, the first historic, the second a May revel. Another May Festival which attracted much attention was that given by the West

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Chicago Park Commissioners, participated in by representatives from six of the parks. The Pageant of the Year was followed by a program of playground activities.

The Mayor of Baltimore has offered \$250.00 in gold for the best original poem on Baltimore suitable for musical setting. Later a prize will be offered for the best musical setting of the prize-winning poem.

Boston has a committee on park shows. These shows were recently inaugurated and will be continued five evenings a week for at least a month and probably all summer. Motion pictures, stereopticon slides and music make up the program, showing among other things the resources of the city for recreation, civic progress and good living. Seymour H. Stone, of the Boston Society for Relief and Control of Tuberculosis, is chairman of the main committee. A sub-committee, charged with arrangements for conducting the entertainments, consists of D. M. Claghorn, Director of Social Work for the Y. M. C. A., Dr. G. W. Tupper of the Immigration Department, State Y. M. C. A., and E. B. Mero, Secretary of the Public Recreation League and Social and Civic Secretary for the Boston Y. M. C. Union. Other co-operating agencies are the Women's Municipal League, Massachusetts Child Labor Committee, District Nursing Association, Milk and Baby Hygiene Association, and the Poster Campaign of the Associated Charities.

The Government of the Philippine Islands, Department of Public Instruction, has called attention to its public school exhibit at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, which includes an exhibit of play and athletic features.

A writer in the *American Physical Education Review* asks: "whether, in its essence, the question of waging war is not one of international sportsmanship; and also, if the proper training of the youth of the nations in sports will not be helpful in bringing about sportsmanship in the nations themselves; and in also inducing a greater willingness to submit disagreements to arbitration. Will not such training eventually demand sportsmanship in its rulers and if the form of government does not give them voice in the matter, demand a kind of government that must recognize such fundamental demands?"

The University of Montana, at Missoula, announces a summer school boys' club and girls' club in which activities similar to those of the Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls will be offered under the direction of the department of physical training.

One of the most progressive efforts to solve the girl problem in

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recreation is that made by the Recreation League of San Francisco, which has a girls' section, which has already largely increased the swimming by girls in the city. Last spring a conference of workers with girls was held as a beginning of an even more serious effort to affect the recreational life of San Francisco girls.

**CIVIC SECRETARY.**—Neillsville, Wis., has inaugurated a civic secretary and organized a community association to co-operate with him. Nine public school principals in the State have been made village or town clerks, but Neillsville is the first place whose Board of Education had added to its staff a civic secretary whose full time will be shared by the city in promoting its business, recreational and municipal work. No less than twenty thousand public meetings were held in Wisconsin public school buildings for adult citizens during the past season.

The inauguration of the civic secretary in Neillsville was the occasion of a great mass meeting. Congratulatory messages were read from many prominent people in the United States, among them Margaret Wilson, who expressed her appreciation of the unique action they were taking, referring to it as an appointment of unusual importance and significance. Professor Graham R. Taylor made the chief address, pointing out the tremendous importance of this recognition of the need of community association and the building up of neighborhood life.

"Recreation is identified with industry in your community interests, play with work, leisure with labor. At last the leisure problem is considered as great as the labor problem. Your section on recreation and your civic secretary will promote interests as vital to the community and as valuable to its life as its commercial, industrial and agricultural interests. The foundations for efficiency in team work both in industry and citizenship are best laid by team play in youth. The well-directed playground is as valuable an educational asset of any community or family or church as their day school or Sunday school."

Finally, as the climax of his address Prof. Taylor summoned the secretary, Walter P. Schatz, whom he taught at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, publicly to answer the question: Do you accept and will you faithfully fulfill to the best of your ability the trust committed to you by your fellow citizens as civic secretary of Neillsville to serve and promote the commercial, industrial, agricultural, municipal, recreational and educational interests of all the people without fear or favor?

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A number of playgrounds in various parts of the country have found swimming carnivals and winter sport days very popular. Worcester, Mass., and Norwalk, Conn., among others report such days. It is said that all public schools in Jersey City in future will contain swimming pools. There is a good deal of feeling in many cities where there are rivers or bays where numbers of children are drowned every summer that it is a municipal duty to make swimming compulsory in the schools in order to avoid this unnecessary loss of life.

The Fair Grounds swimming pool of St. Louis, situated in the old amphitheater, is circular in shape, four hundred and eighty feet in diameter, and is divided into a shallow and deep pool by a strip of land which also serves as a station for life guards and for the general administration of the pool. It is completely surrounded by a wire fence which is found to be absolutely necessary for the effective handling of both bathers and spectators. Admission to the pool is free: a rental charge of five cents for a suit and one cent each for a towel and cake of soap being made to those who do not bring their own. The dressing rooms are so arranged that every bather must pass through an ingenious arrangement of shower baths under the watchful eye of a doctor upon entering the pool. Fresh water flows in continually. The water is chemically treated every night and the pool is completely emptied and scrubbed once a week. Every hour for twelve hours a day, six days a week, two thousand living, shouting, splashing people left the pool and two thousand new people entered within six minutes.

WINTER SPORT.—Park Commissioner Ingersoll of Brooklyn arranged to flood a number of playgrounds in the city and also certain places in some of the large parks so that those who enjoy skating need not wait for the intense cold which freezes the lakes. On this plan there is little danger for the water is very shallow.

Newton, Mass., and Newark, N. Y., made special efforts to provide skating for the playground children. In West Newton, the playground was flooded and in Newark besides flooding some of the playgrounds and using pools in the vicinity for daily skating and for special carnivals, arrangements were made for tobogganing at the playground centers so that the children forsook steep hills with their attending dangers for the wooden inclines of the playground.

Among the rules which Mr. Mason, former secretary of the

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Board of Playground Commissioners, formulated when streets were set aside for coasting were the following:

Coast on hills that are policed.

Don't follow the coaster ahead too closely.

If upset, get up or roll out of the way as quickly as possible.

Get out of the way quickly when you come to the end of the slide.

Do not walk up hill near the sliding course; keep on the sides of the street.

Attach bell or gong to your sled; this will warn others that you are coming, and adds fun at the same time.

Don't crowd several persons on a sled intended for only one person.

Learn to use your feet well for steering or to lessen your speed when necessary.

When walking up the hill and an upset occurs near you, quickly help the fallen off the course, dragging out sled or bobs.

Fill in the bad bumps with snow, as these may cause upsets and consequent accidents.

A number of coasting races were held. At one time so great was the crowd that only one race—that of bob sleds was held and that only after the younger children had been sent home at eight o'clock. Six bob sleds competed for the medal offered by Mr. Mason. The course was lighted with electric lights and red and green fire was used. Police guarded the crossings at the street intersections and when a vehicle approached, held it up until the hill was cleared of flying sleds by means of a lantern signal. The attitude of the residents of the vicinity, which contains numerous mansions, was particularly gratifying to playground authorities; not only were no objections made to the noise made by the youngsters and the inconvenience of having the street closed, but those living along the course apparently enjoyed seeing the children's delight in the sport and took an interest in watching them. Truck and auto drivers who are in the habit of using the hill good-naturedly turned aside when they learned of the use to which it was being put. Six racing events were held on Sundays for single and double sleds—flexible flyers and pointers, some at a flying start and others at a pushing.

The Binghamton, New York, State Hospital for the Insane gave an entertainment by the classes of physical training under the direction of the play leader. Exhibits, drills, folk and aesthet-

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ic dancing by the men and women patients and a bandaging contest by the pupils of the training school made up the program.

**GARDENS.**—Nine hundred and eighty-four persons had garden plots under the Board of Education in Philadelphia last summer, the value of the average child's plot varying from \$2.10 to \$6.68. The total reported retail value of the sample and individual plots from thirteen school gardens was \$2,584.09. Each child is entitled to all the vegetables and flowers he raises on his own plot. The cost of the work for the season averaged sixty-seven cents per child. The garden work is carried on from April until October. The classes alternate and the work of the individual plot holders is graded. Visiting classes from the schools go to the school gardens once a week for inspection. Throughout the season all plot holders are required to keep diaries containing records of the work done, the lessons taught, and the crops harvested. The club women of Philadelphia helped greatly in the work by subscribing more than one hundred dollars to be given in awards for prize products. No money prizes were given, the awards taking the form of garden implements or books.

**CAMPS.**—One of the important developments in municipal camps is that in Los Angeles, which has continued to improve the beautiful vacation camp in the mountains seventy-five miles from Los Angeles as a part of the city's municipal playground system. The State Forest Commission of New Jersey reported to Governor Fielder that negotiations are virtually concluded for the acquirement of Swartswood Lake and Upland by the State for a public playground, park and picnic place. Five hundred and forty-four acres of water and an approach from the public road are included and sixteen acres of upland will be donated when the lake is acquired and made free.

**FORESTRY.**—The Massachusetts Forestry Association is conducting a town forestry contest encouraging the establishment of such forests as that acquired by the city of Fitchburg which set aside one hundred and five acres as a town forest not connected with its parks or water supply in any way. The Association will plant fifty acres with three-year-old, white pine transplants, one thousand, two hundred trees to the acre in the town forest of the city or town in Massachusetts which meets the requirements of the contest. A city or town wishing to enter the contest must have acquired by gift or purchase at least one hundred acres of land and have it officially set aside as a town forest.

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For the past two years the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse has been interesting high schools in the planting of one or more thousand trees on Arbor Day in place of planting a few shade trees only. Then, too, the college is urging that Arbor Day be made a Forest Day in place of a Tree Day. This is done because the college feels that if the boys of the State help in the planting of a forest, the forest fire question will be very largely settled.

An effort is being made in Chicago to forward the securing of tracts for a park and forest reserve which was favorably voted upon at the November election in 1910. Upon technicalities the Supreme Court decreed the action unconstitutional and nothing has since been done. Since the inception of the movement for the Forest Preserve district, land values have risen to more than five times what they were and to secure control of the tracts not already occupied by the homes of wealthy residents, legislation must be secured at once.

**MOVING PICTURES.**—St. Louis has appropriated \$2,000 for free moving picture shows and concerts. The schedule calls for one exhibition in each park and playground every two weeks.

The Denver, Colorado, municipal concerts have proved so popular that it has been necessary to turn hundreds away from the great auditorium at almost every concert.

One of the interesting developments in commercial recreation within the last few years has been the opening of the Strand Roof Garden at Broadway and 47th Street, New York City, by an organized committee, consisting of Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, Miss Elizabeth Marbury, Miss Elsie de Wolf, and Miss Anne Morgan. A cafeteria lunch with the prices from five to twenty cents and dancing, as well as tea and dancing are offered. The announcement of the opening on Jan. 4th, 1915 stated: "Every man, woman and child in this big city who is seeking enjoyment will be made to feel at home as proper chaperones will always be on the spot to welcome guests personally. Families are especially invited so that all ages and classes may meet for a good time together. Comfortable seats will be provided for those who do not dance." Through this roof garden hundreds of New York young people have been provided with safe and enjoyable recreation at moderate prices.

**DANCING.**—In Atlantic City, Springfield, Mass., Allentown, Pa., New Orleans, La., San Diego, Cal., Buffalo, N. Y., playgrounds have been used for evening dances. In Atlantic City, the children were allowed to dance free from 7:30 o'clock for an hour; then the

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concrete floor of the school yard was given over to adults who were charged a penny a dance until 10 o'clock—the time fixed for closing. In Allentown, Pa., an admission of five cents was charged to cover the actual expenses of the evening. In Springfield a platform which would give room for 100 couples was rented at one of the playgrounds. Redlands, Cal., gave a series of dances once a week during the summer on a block of the city street roped off for the purpose, thoroughly washed and sprinkled with corn-meal. A municipal band furnished music and the slight expense of the corn-meal and placing benches for guests was met by the business men of the town.

In New York City under the auspices of Henry Street Settlement, the street was roped off and 6,000 people danced to the music of a band of fifty pieces.

**LIGHTING.**—North Ottawa, Kansas, has arranged for grounds to be well lighted with electricity; and quoits, tennis, ball, croquet and other games by electric light have been very popular. Dayton, Ohio, Williamsport, Pa., Philadelphia, Pa., have playgrounds, well illuminated, open at night.

**ATHLETIC LEAGUES.**—One hundred and fifty golfers and two hundred tennis players entered tournaments in St. Louis, being divided into four local championships, the winners playing for the municipal championship. The number of golf players during the season were particularly interesting as this was the first season on the public links. Every walk of life was represented, a decided refutation of the assertion that golf is a rich man's game. Practically every day the players started as early as 5 a. m. These municipal leagues have had a very great influence not only in popularizing and encouraging amateur athletics but particularly in putting the various sports on a thoroughly clean, healthy basis. Although the leagues are almost entirely self-governed, the Park Department retains a certain amount of control and with the cordial assistance of the players, has secured the elimination of gambling, abusive or profane language, and unfair tactics.

**HARTFORD, CONN.**—Hartford, Conn., reports that the recreation activities in the parks have increased about forty-five per cent each year during the past five years. Bowling on the green has steadily grown in interest, both to players and spectators. Two successful clubs have been organized. With the good-natured rivalry existing the game is sure to grow with each succeeding year. Scotch quoits, a game which Hartford considers

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far superior to the ordinary ring or horse shoe, attracts many men to the parks at Hartford. Croquet, too, is played. On several occasions, dancing on the green was enjoyed by the schools and the Central Labor Union at night under a canopy of varied colored lights. In the park playgrounds more than 200,000 children played for a period of about four hours. Picnics—particularly family picnics, school festivals and parties are held at the Pond House at Elizabeth Park and card parties, dinners, music hours, readings and entertainments have been given at all the parks. A simple fire place has been arranged at Goodwin Park where corn or marsh-mallow roasts, broiled steaks, and steamed frankfurters, have been the basis of delightful parties given by Campfire girls and several Men's Clubs. Hockey, hurdling, and a municipal Christmas Tree were among the activities offered during the winter.

An interesting and rather unusual Easter recreation activity was conducted in Greensport, Pa., under the supervision of Miss Alice Quigley, principal of Cameron Township High School. Several hundred small eggs were purchased in Williamsport and each pupil brought an egg or two to make about 400 in all which the high school girls colored at noon. These eggs were hidden on the hillside opposite the school building, covered with stumps of trees and bushes. The children had a very happy time hunting the eggs on the afternoon fixed for the event. A similar event is held each year in Portland, Oregon.

Opportunities for public recreation have been increased within the last year at the Hudson County Park near Hoboken, New Jersey. Hot and cold shower baths all winter, two fine skating ponds and the privilege of using the out-of-door gymnastic apparatus are offered. A clear sweep of sky, a fine view of Jersey City Heights and West Hoboken, with a shadowy outline of the Palisades to the west, and if one stays late enough, a real sunset, helps one to realize the enormous improvement wrought in a park which, up to a few years ago, was only a sweep of waste meadow.

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As always, during the past year the school people have materially aided the progress of the recreation movement, perhaps more than usual this year because of the widespread interest in the Gary plan, which recognizes the play instincts and activities as basic in education.

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Mr. William A. Wirt, superintendent of schools of Gary, Indiana, considers it his task to provide for the well-being of the children of his city; to provide life for children so that the children may live in a children's world, instead of in a city built for lawyers, doctors, preachers, but not for the children. The task of making a city a good place for the rearing of children, a good place for children to live in—is no small task.

The boy, as Mr. Wirt knows him, is naturally a bundle of squirmings and twistings; to keep him sitting still for long periods is by preventing the contraction and the expansion of his muscles to interfere with the purification of the blood and the normal functions of the body. Mr. Wirt does not consider it necessary that a school system should require every child to do the same thing, in the same way, at the same time, and in the same place. There is no real reason why some children should not be playing while others study and recite. When play becomes a part of the school world for the younger children their attitude toward school changes. A little boy in Gary met Mr. Wirt upon the street and said, "I am going to start school next year." "I hope you will like to go to school," said Mr. Wirt. "I know I shall like the schools," was his reply. When asked why he was so sure that he would like to go to school, he replied, "I have been reading in the papers about the schools and as near as I can make out a feller can take a vacation whenever he wants to."

In Sewickley, Pennsylvania, the superintendent's visit to the Gary schools resulted in the introduction of a departmental plan, which gives the children in the first four grades 412 minutes a week for play under the direction of a special playground instructor; the fifth and sixth grades, 135 minutes, and the seventh and eighth, 112 minutes. This plan has been in operation two years and has proved successful from an educational and financial point of view.

Much of the recreation development in Philadelphia has been accomplished through the Board of Education and the public schools. Governor Brumbaugh, leaving the superintendency of Philadelphia public schools, expressed regret that even more had not been accomplished, adding:

"If now you will heed the unanimous demand for auditoriums in elementary schools throughout the city, you will take a step forward of the greatest consequence. I beg you to do **this**. Do not allow the splendid co-operation of the people in making the schoolhouse a great social center to languish and die by denying

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this city-wide provision. Next to fireproofing the buildings, this is the best thing you can do to make them what they should be, what I confidently predict they will soon be. Why not lead in this? The people want you so to do. Its educational value cannot be computed.

"I also urge you to keep constantly in mind the fact that every child in school is entitled to thirty square feet of play space in the yard. Most of your school grounds are too small. It will pay you, pay Philadelphia, to buy adjacent property and give adequate treatment to the physical welfare of our children."

More than a thousand persons signed a petition which was presented to the Board of Education in Philadelphia, Pa., asking that a playground be established at a new public school which was the only one in the city not provided with a playground.

The Township High School of Peru and La Salle, Illinois, endeavors to combine all the essentials of a junior college for a rural and urban community. Speaking of this institution, its principal, Thomas J. McCormack, said:

"In the four buildings which constitute this unique plant, not only is instruction given and contemplated in all practical and cultural lines, including subjects so far removed from one another as agriculture, art and technical music, but private donations by F. W. Matthiessen have permitted the construction of two buildings that both contribute to the educational facilities of the school and subserve distinctly civic and recreation purposes for the community.

"These are social center and gymnasium building, with swimming pool, bowling alley, billiard room, club and reading room, library, music, art and lecture rooms, which with the large high school auditorium are used both day and night by school and public; and a hygienic institute under a trained medical expert and assistants, with a bacteriological and pathological laboratory, not to be duplicated outside of the great metropolitan centers, a milk station with a trained nurse and a classroom for the instruction of girls in the care of the baby and the general hygiene of the household. This institute, while primarily founded to safeguard the health interests of the cities of La Salle, Peru and Oglesby, is directly affiliated with the school, and officials assist in its instruction of the school classes.

"It is a hopeful augury for the ultimate success of our democratic system of education that the social center of this school is

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supported entirely by the taxes of the people who, in this mining and industrial community, by their loyal and generous support of the school board's plan, are setting an example for work in social amelioration that wealthier communities might not be ashamed to follow."

A group of teachers in Washington, D. C., gave a dramatic performance as a benefit for the Grover Cleveland School Social Center, which was opened as an experiment, supported by voluntary contributions.

Clair K. Turner, professor of physical training for men at the Emporia State Normal School, Kansas, has done a service in demonstrating school room plays and games before public school teachers.

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The making of the recreation of a community the firm bulwark of democracy which it potentially is in its common appeal to all classes and conditions has been forwarded recently by the opening of community centers or club houses in a number of places.

The old court house of Rowan County, at Salisbury, N. C., was remodeled for the use of the people when the new court house was put into service. Through the efforts of the Industrial Club, the Y. M. C. A., the Civic League and various women's organizations, the old structure, built before the civil war, was renovated. It now provides rooms for various clubs and societies, the public library, rest rooms for women who come in from the country, an exhibit hall and an auditorium with a well-equipped stage which can be rented for a nominal fee.

The Board of Trade of Washington, Pa., has opened what is known as a community house in the heart of the business district. Commodious hitching yards are located in the rear. In the building proper are meeting rooms, rest rooms, a day nursery, assembly rooms, package and checking station, and café. The agricultural bureau of the Board of Trade employs a paid county agricultural expert whose office will be in the community house in connection with the executive office of the Board of Trade. Permanent agricultural exhibits have been installed. A chicken and waffle supper, and a public auction of farm products were given at the opening. Hereafter the annual fall festival will be held during community week.

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The object of the opening of this community house was to bring about a more desirable social and business relation between town and country.

The Community Club of Plano, Illinois, has for its object "the promotion of the social, educational, commercial, and moral well-being of the community." A public playground has been established and partly equipped, working with the Plano Gymnasium, maintained for the boys and girls of Plano—equipped and managed by the pastor of the Baptist Church—through the kindly support of the business and professional men of the city. The Community Club and two old and somewhat run-down social clubs combined to provide attractive club rooms where the members gather for social or business occasions, enjoy the music, play billiards or bowl. The paid secretary is also pastor of the Baptist Church.

Holden, Massachusetts, also has a Community House, bought by selling shares at five dollars each. An old, colonial house was remodeled for the House. A Town Club has been formed which leases half the second floor. The Daughters of the American Revolution and the Boy Scouts have permanent headquarters there; a tea-room and the renting of the assembly room furnish revenue. The originator of the idea, William S. Piper, says of it:

"We have united all the interests of the town in a common cause, and we have succeeded in gathering representatives of all the different social strata under one roof. Our town has done this as a town, and, in doing it, has started a movement possible for all places of our kind."

Oceanic, New Jersey, too, has a Community House—formerly an old Presbyterian church, remodeled and enlarged at a cost of \$4,500. The building is nearly twice the size of the original church. It has a vestibule, a coat room and a ticket office at the entrance. The main hall will seat about four hundred persons, and it has a very large stage with footlights and other electrical equipment and it will have as a gift from one of the persons interested in the building a rose-colored velour curtain. The stage is so arranged as to be available as a parlor, reading and game room, sewing room, or dining room, according to the wish of the organization which uses it. In the rear of the stage is a well-equipped kitchen with a large gas range, china closet and a large supply of china, silverware, kitchen and cooking utensils. There is also a women's retiring and dressing room nicely furnished. A gymnasium is in the basement. This room is 24x36 feet with a 12-foot ceiling.

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Some of the equipment is already installed and additional equipment will be put in as fast as funds become available. A gallery is at the front of the building. This gallery is capable of seating about one hundred persons. It is equipped with a billiard and pool table and will be used for this recreation when it is not in use at an entertainment. Back of the gallery is an electrical apparatus for a moving-picture machine. The whole building is heated with steam, and has a splendid system of lighting of which one member remarked, "No saloon or theatre has anything on Oceanic's Community House when it comes to lights." Two lots adjoining have been donated to the House and will be used for tennis and other recreation. The fund for the House was given by the ladies' aid society of one of the churches assisted by numerous permanent and summer residents. Some who could not give money gave labor.

A Farmers' Club Rest Room was donated to Seymour, Indiana. Carthage, Missouri, has a similar room in the County Court house. Faribault, Minnesota; Bonham, Texas; Sauk Center, Minnesota; Luverne, Minnesota; Eau Claire, Wisconsin; Bemidji, Minnesota, also report rest rooms, which, originally established by merchants of the village to attract rural trade, are more and more being used as community meeting places and social centers.

A community in a farming section in Michigan turned an old barn into a community center. Kitchen, library, club room, and play room are provided. All the work was done by the boys, the material largely donated.

Hartford, Conn., has leased the Star Theatre for an experiment in recreation. Besides the auditorium the building contains twenty-four well-furnished bedrooms which will be rented to young men. In one of the large rooms a dancing class will be held. One room is reserved for baby carriages and a nursery will be provided without charge for the children of the patrons of the theatrical performances. Motion pictures and exhibitions of modern dancing will be given, and opportunity will be given for the people who attend the theatre to dance after the performances, on the theatre floor. Saturday mornings there will be children's matinees. Among these will be an experiment of Bible teaching by means of motion pictures, conducted by the Federation of Churches. The Rev. Harry E. Robbins, rector of St. James' Church, W. Hartford, started the experiment without the backing of any organization.

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Ossian Lang suggests that an early social center was the Medieval Synagogue, declaring that the work of the Shamash in setting the atmosphere and bringing the people together was the most important factor. "He was conscience, memory, Nemesis, friend, prompter and newspaper all rolled into one genial personality, cementing the congregation together and keeping them reminded that without him there would be no social center."

La Jolla, California, will soon have a splendidly-equipped community house and playground, the gift of Miss Ellen B. Scripps.

Among the schools which have reported special effort to develop neighborhood centers this year are Lincoln School in Plainfield, New Jersey; Nekoosa High School, San Antonio, Texas; Englewood, New Jersey. Parents' meetings, garden associations, special reading and game rooms are popular activities. The Lincoln Park Club House patrons in Spokane, Washington, employ a woman play director for eight hours on Tuesday of each week.

The Board of Education of the City of New York, in its effort to provide for a wider use of school buildings, has arranged for an art museum in the Washington Irving High School, provided for orchestral concerts, for plays, for meetings, and for neighborhood dances, for daily use of the roof garden, and for an extensive series of scientific, historical, literary and musical evenings given by the Department of Lectures and Libraries.

Public School 93 in Queens is following the same plan as that used in the Washington Irving High School. In this building the auditorium is placed in the second story, leaving the entire first story free for play. Wood block is substituted for the usual asphalt so the place can be used for dancing, study hall, and bazaars.

A new schoolhouse in Woodhaven, Queens, New York City, has twenty-one classrooms, a kindergarten room, sewing, cooking, science rooms, and a work shop. On the first floor there will be a large auditorium with a stage, and seating capacity of six hundred. There are two paved playgrounds outside the building, two indoor playgrounds, and a roof playground.

Over eight hundred rural teachers in Kansas have begun the plan of initiating neighborhood center work in the places where they live, an effort entirely voluntary, yet charged with tremendous meaning for these districts.

Another rural development which opens up tremendous possibilities is "The Texas Farm Woman," an organization for neigh-

## RECREATION EQUIPMENT

borhood center work, relief, recreation, and education in the rural districts of the State. Farm women only will direct this work. It is distinctly of, by, and for farm women.

## RECREATION EQUIPMENT

Dr. Henry S. Curtis advocates strongly keeping some sort of menagerie even in a small way upon each playground to develop the interest of the children in nature and play nurture. A little pig is always interesting to children and two or three chickens. In the Emerson school in Gary, Ind., there is a coon house and tree. In a yard of the Froebel School is a large fountain filled with fish. Bird and squirrel houses in the trees about the playgrounds help to develop the love of nature which is so desirable in children.

The Parent-Teachers Association of the Logan School in Spokane, Wash., has voted to improve the school grounds at a cost of several hundred dollars. Tennis courts, basket ball courts and baseball grounds will be provided. The patrons have also decided to bear the expense of converting the main hallway into an auditorium by constructing a large stage and a large number of portable seats. The Association had previously purchased a Victrola and a large number of records, bought playground equipment, planted a lawn and shade trees around the grounds and bought a stereopticon with six hundred educational slides.

The story is told of a Kansas City woman who, passing one of Topeka's model schools at recess time, saw in a well-equipped playground one of the attractions that brought farm folk to the cities. Returning home she invited the big boys of the school to a doughnut and lemonade feast at her house, described the Topeka playground and proposed that if they would build the necessary apparatus, she would supply the lumber and fittings. They mapped out the ground, drew plans for the swings, see-saws, horizontal bars, vaulting horses and everything that boy ingenuity could improvise from lumber and poles; the material she donated. It was at first proposed that the local blacksmith's services be enlisted but the boys insisted on doing all the work themselves. Two basket ball courts, one for girls and one for boys, were fitted out. The school became so popular a place that even parents drove from all parts of the school district to inspect the playground. The interest thus awakened has already resulted in unexpected bene-

## RECREATION EQUIPMENT

fit to the school in the way of aid from parents and increase of equipment for teachers.

Similar co-operation resulted in equipping a playground for small children at the Ellis Memorial in Boston. First, the yard had to be cleared up and cemented. That meant an expenditure of \$85. A bubble fountain cost \$28; a slide and a swing nearly \$20 more. It did not take long for the neighbors to realize what as going on and between them and other interested friends about \$35 was contributed toward these expenses. Some available money was left from other funds, and that was used, and then the general public had an opportunity to contribute. A generous sum was collected, although not sufficient for all.

But better than the money given by the neighbors was their expressed desire to have an actual part in the work of transforming the yard. One man contributed all the loam for the flower beds along the sides; another, a carpenter, was proud to be able to make the sandbox, and do other jobs which were needed, including an effective arrangement of fence wires designated for the discouragement of older boys who might be on mischief bent. In various other ways the fathers and mothers have shown their desire to make this place attractive and safe.

In York, Pa., more than one hundred and fifty persons, armed with picks and shovels, gathered on an unsightly dump, and soon made it into a baseball diamond. The use of horses and carts was donated for an evening in order that ground might be conveyed to fill in the dump. The work was done under the supervision of the Grantley Athletic Club which also supervises the maintenance of the park. The park is very much the property of the people who actually worked with hand and brain to make it a possibility. The old dumping ground near Flushing, L. I., will be filled in and laid out as a playground. The land had been the property of the city for some time but nothing had been done to improve it until inspectors of the Department of Health visited the so-called park and found children sailing boats in the slimy water of an open sewer. No further argument was needed to convince the people of the immediate need of a playground. In Dunkirk, N. Y., two churches have established playgrounds for children.

In a report submitted to the playground commission in Savannah, Ga., Montague Gammon, playground director, stated that the equipment of each of the playgrounds had cost about \$150 exclusive of labor and material furnished by the city depart-

## HOME PLAYGROUNDS IN THE BASEMENT

ments. Play leaders were sent twice a week to the Bethesda Orphanage and the Episcopal Orphanage. The attendance on the municipal grounds in eight weeks increased from 5,000 to 13,000.

State College, near Harrisburg, Pa., now has a playground of 105 acres laid out in soccer fields, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and football gridirons. The basic idea of the athletics of the college is to get all the men interested in some sort of physical activity outdoors. This playground is one of the largest belonging to any college in the country.

The city golf course in Denver, Colo., has proved one of the most effective and popular of the recreation activities of the city. For some time the course consisted of nine holes only, but so great was the interest that the course was enlarged to eighteen holes.

The Baltimore, Md., Playground Association had moving pictures made of the activities of eight of the park playgrounds, to be shown at different moving picture theatres with an appeal for money to carry on the work to give children a chance to become better and healthier men and women. The Automobile Club is co-operating with the playground in their efforts to keep the children off the busy streets. The first picture shown is that of small boys playing on the streets, running in front of street cars and automobiles; one of the boys is knocked down by a machine.

## HOME PLAYGROUNDS IN THE BASEMENT

JOHN H. CHASE

Superintendent, Youngstown Playground Association,  
Youngstown, Ohio

Most basements have for their ceiling exposed sleepers or floor joists and these are just the thing for hanging apparatus, and do away with expensive, clumsy frameworks.

Little children like, the most of all, swings, sandgardens, and traveling rings. The latter are not the conventional trapeze, but are a long row of rings hung by ropes from the ceiling. A child swings from the first to the second, lets go of the first and flies to the third and so on down the line.

First then swings; and these for children under twelve or thirteen years old. Buy a 'hank' (or coil) of sash cord (size No. 8 or 9), at a hardware store. This looks like ordinary clothes line but is ten times stronger, and will cost about one dollar. A coil will be enough for two swings and four traveling rings. At the same time buy six No. 802 screw hooks for thirteen cents. On getting home put these in the beams of the basement ceiling or attic from 14 inches to two feet apart and turn the open side of the hook away from the swing at right angles to the direction in which the swing flies so that the rope cannot jump off the hook. Make the swing seat of any board that is around the house. The best size is six inches wide, fourteen inches long, and one inch thick. Bore holes

## HOME PLAYGROUNDS IN THE BASEMENT

in the ends to keep the rope in place, or simply make notches in the ends with a saw. This is perfectly good enough and the swing is all ready for all kinds of fun with only half an hour's work. In fact, it is so much fun that the children will squabble over turns and the best way is to build one or two more swings or else tell the spectators to count fifty swoops and then let the next child have his or her turn. The swing will look weak, but it is really strong. If the man who made it is incredulous, let him try it himself.

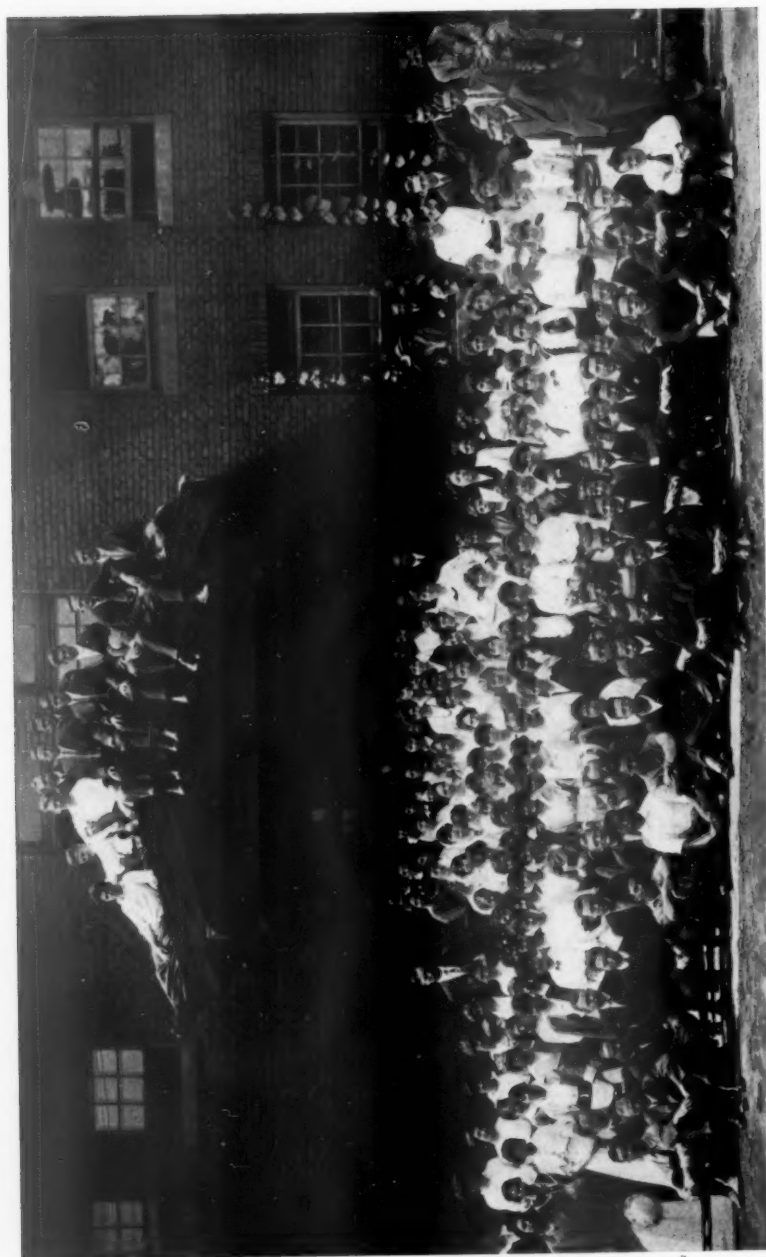
Now for a sand box. Any wooden packing box around the house is good enough. We found one two feet wide, four feet long, and two feet deep. We nailed cleats over all the cracks and on one side made the box only one foot deep. The Youngstown Ice Co. will send a sack of beautiful, clean lake shore sand for only twenty-five cents (with perhaps a little extra for delivery), and this was enough for the whole garden. Now wet the sand so that it will hold its shape for caves, castles and artificial lakes, and children up to eleven years old will enjoy it. Those of us who have been to Atlantic City remember the wonderful shapes and figures made in the sand by even adult artists.

Lastly the traveling rings. If you buy the regulation outdoor steel framework with chain ropes and ball bearing sockets similar to the one at Yale school it will cost you \$1.00 at least—and be worth it. But go to the ten-cent store, ask for wooden towel rings (which are about five inches across), hang these rings in a row about three feet apart with the screw hooks and sash cord that you already have, and presto, the traveling rings are in your own home at the large expenditure of fifty or sixty cents, and your boy or girl will be the most popular child in the neighborhood.

Thus a playground for the winter with three of the things that children like the most, can be built for two or three dollars in our own homes. And anyone can make it with two hours' work and a hammer and saw. It will look crude, but will be sturdy and strong, and it will satisfy the hearts of the children.

If the swings are in the way of the laundress, just slip them off the hooks when she is there, or put another hook about four feet in front of the swing, and catch the rope over this hook just below the seat. The whole seat will then be close up to the ceiling and out of the way.

The traveling rings are practical even if the basement is only seven or eight feet high. One basement is seven feet, two inches high, but with only nineteen inches from the ceiling the bottom of the rings has provided fun and the traveling rings for a nine-year-old girl and her friends—bigger or smaller. Five sets of toboggan slides were built in Worcester and distributed to the various playgrounds about the city for the children to coast on with the idea that the children would greatly welcome slides on the playground nearest their homes and keep off the dangerous hills and streets where traffic is held. The first one built is ten feet high and forty feet long. At night the caretaker sprinkles the running board with water which freezes over with a fine, glassy surface which makes coasting just as speedy as on a steep hill. The shoots are made in parts so that they may be taken down in summer and stored away.



*Pittsburgh, Pa.*

PLAY LEADERS OF THE SUMMER OF 1914

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### THE COST OF PLAYGROUNDS

Chicago appropriated \$4,000,000 for recreation centers.

What was the feeling of the Chicago people regarding the success of this experiment?

Each year since there have been not only appropriations large enough to carry on the work begun, but \$2,500,000 was appropriated within the year after the first appropriation, until Chicago has now spent more than \$11,000,000 for recreation centers.

The field houses in Chicago cost from \$70,000 to \$250,000 each.

Yet the tax amounted to only seventy-five cents on an assessed valuation of \$10,000.

The whole community has a common meeting place for old and young, elevating rather than degrading, for the entire year for a total cost for maintenance each year of only 25 cents for each citizen. The total investment is only about \$5 for each citizen.

*(Facts taken from an address by Dr. Henry S. Curtis)*